



EMBASSY  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF CIVIL OPERATIONS

Headquarters, CORDS, III CTZ  
23 August 1967

Dr. Dan Ellsberg  
c/o Mr. Morton Halpern  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)  
Department of Defense  
Washington, D. C. 20301

Dear Dan:

This is a follow up to my quick note this past Saturday. I had a long session with Colonel Chau yesterday and I had him listen to your tape recording. I had hoped to have him tape an answer to you and make detailed observations. However, he thought it was unnecessary because, as he stated, he agreed with your analysis of the situation with one major exception.

He feels that you misread the probability of civilian candidates taking up the banner of negotiations or ceasefire. He attributes these statements to be politically oriented for the purpose of votes alone and also to encourage personnel under some form of control by the VC to come out and vote. Specifically, he sees it as a tactic of civilian candidates to get a large group of new voters to the polls so as to give them a chance against, as a minimum, a built-in 20 per cent advantage to the Thieu-Ky ticket.

Chau believes that the only way to get the civilian candidates to throw their support to Huong is for direct American high level Embassy pressure on these candidates. Left to their own, he sees no possibility of them getting together. He believes that Suu and Dan, as well as Dzu, would be most agreeable to backing Huong if they were convinced that the Huong ticket had official American support. Chau says that the key points in your tape are:

- with which he agrees in your assessment*
- a. That the Thieu-Ky ticket will probably win.
  - b. That in the process of winning, they will fail to obtain the legitimacy that would be associated with a free and honest election.
  - c. That there will be a great disillusionment among those who object to the way the government is now being run.

*(civilian)  
& Ky*



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d. That our job will be much more difficult under a Thieu-Ky government than under a civilian government.

Ton That Thien and Chau are getting together frequently and Chau is certain that Thien would be interested (along with him) in the Rand project that Harry Rowan is considering. Chau is very anxious to make a trip to Washington prior to the elections for the Lower House (October 22), and I think he would be invaluable in Washington in helping assess the result of whatever does happen on September 3rd. I strongly urge you to do everything possible to secure an invitation for him.

Returning to another point -- that of ceasefires, negotiations, bombing halts, etc. -- Chau makes a very strong case that neither the Viet Cong nor Hanoi would be willing to negotiate at all at this time. He thinks that they have accommodated themselves to such punishment as we can inflict and are now content to suffer this punishment until the 1968 elections in the US. He feels that it would take either a significant increase in the punishment by air or a sudden successful breakthrough (highly unlikely) in pacification by the GVN to change the minds of the Communists relative to negotiations. He sees a ceasefire or a bombing halt as merely providing a breather for the North Vietnamese without the probability of negotiations resulting. Chau personally is very biased on this in that he feels that negotiations are tantamount to a defeat. I must say that I agree with his bias.

General Stanley Larsen's report to the President has generated a requirement for senior officers in each of the other three Corps areas to turn in a "similar report." I don't know if you have seen Larsen's report, but it includes such gems as:

a. "There were no major roads open in II Corps when I came here in 1965. Today, 90 per cent of the roads are open."

b. "Fifty-five per cent of the population was under VC control in 1965. Today, only 11 per cent are under VC control."

c. "The VC controlled nearly all of the rice growing land in Phu Yen. Today, Phu Yen is largely under government control."

d. "The rail line operations were practically non-existent. Today, 55 per cent of the railroad is in operation."



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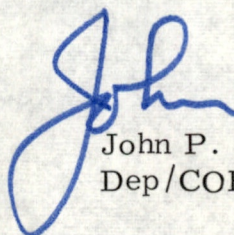
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e. "Since 1965, 7,000 Communists have been killed in this Corps area and only 800 Americans have been killed."

Needless to say, such false and spurious reporting as this merely convinces our policy makers that what we are doing is correct and there is no need for any significant changes. I wonder whether anyone asked General Larsen how many South Vietnamese were killed in addition to the 800 Americans in the II Corps area during his cited time period. One thing is certain: General Larsen's fourth star is assured.

Will close this for now and will drop you a quick line if I pick up anything else.

Best regards,



John P. Vann  
Dep/CORDS